

Leading intercessions in our Services

Thank you for leading our intercessions in a Church service.

The Aim of intercessions in our Services

- To lead the congregation in prayer for other people and for situations
- To pray for God's Kingdom to come, for God's will to be done and for our 'daily bread' (Matthew 6:9-13)
- To pray for everyone, especially those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness – so that all people will be saved (1 Tim 2:1-4)
- To model intercessory prayer, so that what we do in our services becomes part of our everyday lives

They are not the place for

- Confession or Praise – important, but we have those in another part of the service
- Meditation
- Giving notices
- Telling people what God thinks
- Telling people what you think!

Ahead of time and on the day

- When you get the rota, check your availability. If you are not available, please arrange a swap and tell the Intercessions rota co-ordinator
- Prepare the intercessions. Pray them yourself before the service.
- Time yourself in advance, reading at 'prayer speed'. Intercessions should not be about 5 minutes.
- Arrive in church at least 10 minutes before service begins. Make sure the warden knows you are there.
- Ask for feedback from service leader, your friends

For whom do we pray?

"I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercessions and thanksgiving be made for everyone"

Choose a couple of things to focus on from each of the following sections

1. The World

- The emphasis is that we pray for everyone everywhere. Try not to just pray generally for nations, but for leaders of the nations, and the people of those nations.
- How do we pray for peace? Or rather should we not pray for people that they might know peace?

- For people who are victims of environmental disaster, economic problems, injustice, prisoners of conscience
- For those who have to take decisions that affect our lives: political and national leaders, business leaders, media leaders.
- Praying for the head of state in Luxembourg (Grand Duc Henri) and the leaders of the nations of people in our congregation.
- Pray for the charities we support and their work internationally and more locally

2. Local Communities

- We have a particular responsibility for the English-speaking international community, but also the wider Lux society in which we live (and neighbouring countries too).
- Local communities – people in positions of responsibility (politicians), business leaders, media, schools, police, families, couples, singles, younger people, older people
- People who work in local institutions: European Institutions, schools and university, businesses, hospitals, hospice
- Be alert to the latest news from paper/TV/radio: but don't become a newsreader!

3. The Church (the people of God)

- International: overseas churches, churches facing persecution, mission partners
- National: Archbishops, our own bishops, the Church of England's witness, unity, Synods, Lux Church leaders (of different denominations)
- Chaplaincy: "In" – groups that nurture our life as a community, Church Office, Junior Church and Youth Group, Wardens and Council, Staff; "Up" – our Sunday worship and those who support it (service leaders, preachers and those who lead Time to Talk, choir, First Sunday Group, Readers, etc), growing in expectation of encountering Jesus; "Out" – for our publicity, website, Invitation and Welcome, Alpha, evangelism.
- Specific events in our church's life: look at the weekly Mailchimp (usually published on Friday morning before the Sunday)

4. Individuals

God works through individuals (2 Chronicles 36:22). If we don't pray specific prayers we cannot expect specific answers!

- Individuals with a specific task
- Individuals in need: be sensitive to issues of confidentiality. If in doubt, please speak to the Rota co-ordinator or Chaplain
- Individuals who are bereaved - pray with confidence, trusting God's promises (This is why we do not pray for the dead, although we can 'Give thanks for them', or 'Remember them before God')

Planning Prayers for regular Sunday Services

Include standard forms of prayer

What are the Bible passages about? Do they give any hints? (Warning: Please don't give us a second sermon!)

Forms of Intercession can be found in Common Worship: (page 281-289) or on the Common Worship website

But vary order if appropriate

<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/worship/liturgy/commonworship/texts/hc/intercessions.html>

<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/worship/liturgy/commonworship/texts/daily/prayers/prayers.html>

<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/worship/liturgy/commonworship/texts/newpatterns/texts/sectionf.html>

2. Add your own choice of prayers.

Try and get a mix of

- set prayers from the Service book
- published prayers from other books
- prayers you write yourself for the occasion

See Common Worship: Prayers for Various Occasions (page 101) or

<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/worship/liturgy/commonworship/texts/word/prayers2.html>

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/topical-prayers/leading-prayer-through-intercessions>

3. Keep prayers short and easy to concentrate on. Any prayers you choose/write should be no longer than the average 'collect' length.

4. It is best to avoid 'spur of the moment' prayers, unless you are sure it is appropriate - they can end up rambling and waffling!

5. Don't try and cover everything. It might be right to simply focus on one country or on one situation.

6. You are enabling other people to pray

- Use silence. Give people time to think and pray time (When you say 'Let's have silence' it will seem much longer to you, so time it on your watch: 15-30 seconds of silence is a good length of time)
- Don't preach at people, or express your own personal viewpoint (eg. we pray that the N Party will win the next general election)
- Avoid the temptation to teach during prayers: prayers are from the people to God, not vice-versa!!
- Also, be extremely careful when praying about subjects which may be sensitive to members of the congregation, such as divorce, etc.

7. Use an introduction (eg. 'We pray for next week's invitation service'), followed by silence and then a prayer, and/or a response.

8. Include thanksgiving in your prayers.

Beginning, during and ending Intercessions

An opening sentence or promise from the Bible can set the right tone or theme for the prayers.

Biddings

“Let us pray for the Church and for the world, [and let us thank God for his goodness]”.

“In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ, let us pray to the Father”.

“From the rising of the sun to its setting, let us pray to the Lord”.

“Let us pray to the Father”.

Using responses keeps others involved: repeat response at the beginning, so people know what it is that they are being asked to say. Keep the response very simple!

General

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

Lord, hear us: **Lord, graciously hear us.**

God of love: **hear our prayer.**

Father of all: **hear your children’s prayer.**

In faith we pray: **we pray to you our God.**

Lord, meet us in the silence: **and hear our prayer.**

Seasonal

Father of life: **make known your glory.**

Lord, revealed in the world: **hear our prayer.**

Lord, we come to the cross: **in your mercy, hear us.**

Lord of life: **in your mercy, hear us.**

Father, Lord of creation: **in your mercy, hear us.**

As we pray to the Father: **Lord, send your Spirit.**

Father, by your Spirit: **bring in your kingdom.**

Your kingdom come: **your will be done.**

Ending prayers

Acknowledge that we are praying together with the saints.

“Rejoicing in the fellowship of [N and of] all your saints,
we commend ourselves and the whole creation to your unfailing love.”

Liturgical endings:

'Merciful Father: accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ ..'

'The Grace' may be appropriate (occasionally) at the end of prayers, although for many people they will hear that as the end of the service.

Finally

- Be open to the Spirit. You might be led to do something very different (eg. open prayer, splitting people into groups for prayer, active prayer) but please check with the service leader or vicar that it is appropriate for this particular service.
- Remember to whom we are praying: 'Our Father in Heaven'
- Remember for what we are praying: 'Your kingdom come, your will be done'
- Remember why we are able to pray: 'Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Lord'
- Remember our need for the Holy Spirit

Other resources

Biblical guidance: Matthew 6:9-13; 1 Timothy 2:1-4; Romans 8:26-27

<http://www.prayerguide.org.uk>

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/topical-prayers/leading-prayer-through-intercessions>

Adapted from <http://www.wearechurch.net/resources/leading-intercessions/>